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THE USE OF THE VERB MALACH, "TO REIGN,"
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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The verb *malach* is used in Scripture to express two related ideas: first, to become a king or "begin to reign;" and second, "to reign," or be King, through a period of time. There are three forms in which the verb mostly occurs. The third person, singular, masculine of the past tense, in the Kal form, occurs 108 times; and sometimes marks the beginning of a reign, and at other times, generally, the end of it. When noting the beginning, it should be rendered "began to reign" and when the complete period of reigning, it should be rendered "reigned." In 2 Chron. 25: 1, *malach* is found twice before the *Athnach*, i. e., in the first clause; and is first rendered "he began to reign" and in the second place "he reigned." It is so also at 2 Chron. 29: 1. These are cases in point, justifying the double rendering of the word *malach*. When this tense is translated "shall reign", as it is at Is. 24: 23, and "reigneth" in eight other places it is absolutely wrong; and what is more, it makes that which is definite, vague and indefinite. One of the two meanings assigned should be given to this tense in every instance of its occurrence. It is 25 times properly rendered "began to reign" in both King James' and the Revised versions.

Not only is *malach* used, in the above cases, to signify the beginning of the reign of certain Kings of Judah and Israel; there are eight places where it marks, in the same way, *the beginning of that Kingdom of God* which is yet to come and for which we are commanded to pray "Thy Kingdom come." Here *malach* must be rendered either "has reigned" or "has begun to reign". To render "has reigned" does not give a good sense: to say "has begun to reign" is not only a good meaning but harmonizes with the several contexts and agrees

with all the teachings of the Old and New Testament that the Kingdom is a future event. The traditional error upon this subject of the Kingdom which has been received and taught generally, is the one great reason why scholars in the past as well as the present have so misunderstood what is taught by the tense in the Hebrew verb. The belief that the descriptions of the Kingdom are figurative, and the Kingdom itself a present and spiritual Kingdom, has led them to translate, not as it is written, but so as to conform to their accepted theory. This has thrown the tenses into confusion: and it is adequate cause for the production of the prevalent scepticism with regard to the time of the verb. If scholars had seen that from Moses to Malachi, the prophets generally were writing of the closing period of this economy, they would have understood the verb and its prophecies better than they now do.

Lest the query should be raised "why the long break between the time when the Divine—human King is *born* to the throne and the time when He *begins* to reign centuries after?"—let it be borne in mind that Jesus came to His own people, the Jews, and proclaimed Himself their King and tendered them the Kingdom. They refused Him and cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar." The Jews having rejected and despised Him, God in mercy, turned to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. This necessitated a postponement of the Kingdom and of His beginning to reign "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

The reader cannot fail to observe that the time of the 24th and 52nd chapters of Isaiah is that of the coming and visible presence of the Jehovah man who then begins, as the text asserts, to be King on Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem; and thereafter "the Government" shall be on "His shoulder." It is His of right now, but a usurper, who is the God of this world, holds it temporarily. At His coming, because of the outshining of His personal glory, the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed (Is. 14: 19); and the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, and salvation, and that saith to Zion "thy God has begun to reign" are pronounced "beautiful."

The 47th Psalm, with the two preceding ones, the 45th and

46th, is prophetic of the same time, viz., that of His becoming a King; and this fact necessitates the natural translation of the word, in the 8th verse, "God has begun to reign." It is because Jehovah, Most High, will then become a great King "over all the earth" (verses 2, 8, 9,) that all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, will be called on to "clap hands" and to "shout" with the voice of triumph! and in v. 7 to "sing psalms unto Him"! Four times, the word for "sing psalms" occurs in this verse of only six words! The two other words are, "to our King" and "God."

The 93rd Psalm and those following to the hundredth are all Messianic! Their contents show this. The people are to come before *His presence* with thanksgiving because He will then be a great King. The Heavens are to rejoice thereat and the Earth be glad. The sea is to roar and the fulness thereof. The field shall exult and all that therein is; and then the trees of the wood shall "sing for joy." The floods shall "clap their hands" and the hills, or mountains, rather, are to be "joyful together." And what cause, is there for such manifestations of inanimate nature except that the Lord Jesus has come back, visibly, to judge and be King over the earth?

On the 96th psalm and 10th verse, J. Addison Alexander writes: "Jehovah reigns, has begun to reign, i. e., visibly." His scholarship compelled him to avouch here a doctrine which he ordinarily disowned! The 96th and 98th psalms call on the people to sing "a new song" to the Lord. Why a *new song*, unless the circumstances of the times were wonderfully altered, as they then will be, furnishing a grand occasion for the new song? Rashi, a great authority among the Jews says: "In every place 'new song' concerns the future."

Before proceeding further, with this subject of "the Kingdom" which a look at these texts of the past tense has brought to light, from its hiding place, into which the mis-rendering of the King James' and the Revision had deposited it, I will briefly show the use of the two other forms in which the verb is considerably employed, since together they will help to intensify the distinctions of meaning already drawn and to exhibit the precision with which the Sacred writers used the verb.

The second, of the three forms, is the converted past tense *wayyimloch*. It is found 83 times. It usually opens the second clause of a verse; and means, either, "*and* (he) began to reign", or, "*and* (he) reigned", the context deciding which definition to give. The simple past tense is found too, in several clauses, but when the matter of the first clause requires that of the 2nd clause to be connected by the conjunction this form is necessarily used for there is no other way of writing "*and* he reigned", than by the use of *wayyimloch*, the converted past.

Both *malach* and *wayyimloch*, the past, and converted past, are many times rendered by the same word; and there is no reason why the converted past tense should not be translated as the simple past is (barring the conjunction), although the translators have been chary of so doing. There is not a shadow of difference *as to time and meaning* between the two forms except that the latter carries before it the conjunction AND.

The 3rd of the three forms is the *Infinitive construct*, with an ablative prefix and suffix of the 3rd person masculine *Bemolcho*. Literally, it means, "on his reigning." It occurs 39 times, and is every time rightly rendered, in the Revision, "WHEN he began to reign"; and in our common Bible it is so rendered everywhere except at 1. Sam. 13: 1.

These three forms furnish us 230 passages with five shades of meaning, namely; *Malach*, "he began to reign" or "he reigned;" *Way-yim-loch*, "AND he began to reign" or "AND he reigned;" *Be-mol-cho*, "WHEN he began to reign."

To resume, as to the matter of the Kingdom, it is only in that the first of these three forms we find reference to God's Kingdom; and the 8 texts thereto alluding cannot convey the mere abstract idea of God's reign, nor can they as past tenses, properly be rendered as futures or presents. They point, unequivocally, as with an index finger to the *beginning* of a Kingdom yet to come! Does not John in Revelation, when writing of that same, yet future period, describe the beginning of the Kingdom of God when he says (11: 15) "the Kingdoms of *this World* are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever?" Did not Daniel too, see in the night visions, (7: 13) the same

unaccomplished event? explaining: "And, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven, one like unto a Son of Man, to the Ancient of days, and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom." There is no trick of words here. The text means what it asserts and it will ere long become a realized fact. This Kingdom is yet to come. It is not a spiritual but a literal Kingdom, and as truly such as were those of the four great World powers symbolized by the four metals in the image of a man which Nebuchadnezzar saw, which have apparently run their course, but which are to be re-existent at the time of the end, in a confederation of ten Kings symbolized by the ten toes of the metallic image, under the lead of a personal Anti-christ, yet to appear on the stage, which it is to destroy and succeed. The eminent Charnock wrote: "Nevertheless this Kingdom will come. It will be a literal Kingdom. Immanuel will reign on David's throne in splendid majesty forever. He will be a visible King, making all things new." And Dr. Thomas Chalmers, in his sermon on the New Heavens and Earth wrote: "The object of the administration we are under is to extirpate sin, but it is not to sweep away materialism. There will be a firm earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched out over it, as we have at present. It is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin that the abodes of immortality will be characterized. It will be a paradise of sense but not of sensuality. It is then that heaven will be established upon earth and the petition of our Lord's prayer be fulfilled 'thy Kingdom come.'"

Does not a Kingdom, as men understand it, imply (1) a King, (2) subjects, (3) territory, (4) Laws and (5) Administrators of Laws? Is it right to try to spiritualize these? If all peoples, nations and languages are to serve Him when He becomes a King (Dan. 7:14) how can these terms be spiritualized? If the Holy Spirit had intended a spiritual Kingdom would He not have said so, in plain language, as He does, when speaking of a spiritual Rock, and spiritual meat, and spiritual drink? Does not common consent refer *the time* of the 22d Psalm to Messiah's days and does not David assert, in allusion to those coming days, "For the *Kingdom*

is Jehovah's and He is the Governor among the nations? Has the Son of Man yet sent forth His Angels and separated "the tares" from "the wheat" out of His Kingdom? Or, will He let the present mixed state of wheat and tares continue till the time comes when He shall take the Kingdom? Are the righteous now shining forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father? It must be so if the Kingdom is already come. Is not the command to pray "thy Kingdom come" a useless and incomprehensible one, if, as Dr. Hodge says, in his *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 596, "this Kingdom has existed in our World ever since the fall of man?" Did not Jesus say, "*now* is my Kingdom *not* from hence?" How dare men to contradict Him and to say it is here now? Has the Son of Man come in the glory of His Father with His Angels and has He rewarded every man according to his work? It must have been, if the *Kingdom* is here now! When the Pharisees demanded of Him "when the Kingdom of God *should come*," did Jesus say it was here already and a spiritual Kingdom, or did He intimate it was yet to come with the suddenness of a flash of lightning? Is not Jesus, the certain nobleman, now in exile, in a far country, *waiting* to *receive* for Himself a Kingdom and *to return*? Was Joseph of Arimathea, "a good man and a just," wrong in *waiting for the Kingdom of God* when he went to Pilate and craved the body of Jesus? Did he not know that the Kingdom which Jesus tendered them, and they refused, was necessarily postponed and hence he waited? Have the many, as yet, come from the East and West and sat down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven? Has the Lord Jesus Christ's appearing and Kingdom been seen and has the judgment of quick and dead taken place? Has the Lord given crowns of righteousness to all those that have loved His appearing, or is it future yet? Have the kingdoms of "this world" yet become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and is He now reigning forever and ever? Did not Jesus say to the twelve, "you have been with me in my temptations and I appoint unto you *a Kingdom* as my Father hath appointed unto me?" Have they gotten their Kingdom now, or has He gotten His? Is not that a master proof

text (Matt. 19:28) for an expected renovation of the earth, by the *personal* intervention of Jesus in power and glory to establish upon it His own throne and the thrones of His 12 apostles which reads: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration (or New World as Peshitto renders it) when the Son of Man *shall sit on the throne* of His glory ye also shall sit upon 12 *thrones* judging the 12 tribes of Israel?" Does not this text place *the Kingdom* in the New World? Then, it cannot be in this. Does not Jesus virtually declare that the Kingdom is yet future when He said to His apostles, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come?" When this promised Kingdom comes will there be any sorrow, sickness or death in the World? The Word of God says No. How can any one say that the Kingdom exists now, in any sense, either literally or spiritually in view of the universal reign of death still continuing? No, God's Kingdom is *not* here. When it comes it will not be contemporaneous with any other, nor in fellowship with those now dominating this present evil world, but crushing and destructive to them. God's is a kingdom impossible in such a scene as this and yet it is to be an earthly Kingdom in perfect harmony with all the spotless splendor of God.

As God's direct and immediate government of earth has been interrupted by the entrance of sin into our world and as the putting away of sin and the re-establishment of His Kingdom over His sinful creatures involved, in the Divine program, two comings of His Son, and as, in the interim, *the whole world* lies in the evil one (1 Jno. 5:18) and Satan's kingdom alone exists, does it not behoove every one who loves the Lord Jesus, while he celebrates in the Eucharist His dying love *till He come* back again, to pray: "Hasten *thy* coming and *thy* Kingdom O Christ?" For when He returns to set up His Kingdom Satan's kingdom will be destroyed and God's will shall then be done on earth as perfectly as it now is done in Heaven!